

Signature: Ashley Shields___ Date: _May 2, 2025___ Box: _____

NUR323
SUBSTANCE ABUSE SELF HELP GROUP
CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

Substance Abuse Related Support Group
(AA, Narcotics Anonymous, or AL-ANON meeting, etc.)

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this activity is twofold: 1. to increase the student's awareness and knowledge regarding group dynamics that occur within meetings and 2. experience another setting involving clients with substance abuse issues. It is expected that you will apply what you learn during future interactions with others, including your clients. (*This assignment is counted into off-site clinical hours for the course.*)

OUTCOMES:

The learner will:

1. List the goals of Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous or AL-Anon, etc.
2. Identify membership eligibility. (What does one have to do to become a "member"?)
3. Identify the referral process to AA or Al-Anon, etc. (How can someone join? Who can and does refer them to the meetings? Could you refer someone to a meeting now that you know about an AA meeting?)
4. Describe the meeting's events from direct observation. What happened at the meeting you attended?
5. Discuss the role AA, NA or AL-Anon plays in relationship to the members' day-to-day life (12 step implementation). How does this group/AA attendance help them to stay sober?
6. Describe the insight gained through this learning experience, and how this insight may be useful with future clients. Worth 20% of the grade, it is expected that critical reflection of the learning experience is evident within the description provided.

DIRECTIONS: (Total Possible Points are 25)

1. Attend an AA, NA or Al-Anon, etc. meeting. Wear appropriate street clothes. Do NOT wear your uniform or lab coat. Introduce yourself to the group leader prior to the meeting. During the meeting you will most likely be asked to introduce yourself by your first name and to state your reason for attending. You are to observe only. Save your questions for after the meeting, then you may query the leader or a member. Meeting listings can be found in your local paper or in the course packet. You may only attend "open" meetings. You may attend a meeting in your local hometown area, if is more convenient. No more than two students may attend the same meeting at the same time.
2. Prepare and submit a ***formal typed report addressing each of the above outcomes*** and any other observations, thoughts, etc. you would like to discuss. Remember even though you may attend a meeting with a peer, you are not to discuss the meeting in the preparation of your graded assignment. This is considered to be an independent work. Appropriate APA format must be used for referencing. Appropriate spelling, grammar and complete sentences are expected to be used throughout this assignment. Do proofread prior to submitting.

Alcoholics Anonymous' main goal is to help people with their sobriety, maintain a judgement free environment, and provide support to those who struggle with alcohol addiction. Most places don't have a requirement for AA membership outside of addiction to alcohol and wanting to get sober. There are some places that require you to be sober for a certain amount of time and meet certain goals before you can become a sponsor, but each place is different. The meeting I went to is more of a case by case basis instead of a set time like 5 years clean, but they try to be somewhat careful. They also said they can't really stop someone from being a sponsor if they choose to and the main goal is providing support to people.

To find a meeting, I reached out to a friend, and he put me in touch with Dan at the Center which is a mental health facility. That's really all it takes. If you can find an open meeting, you can attend. I'm not familiar with the closed meeting processes, but I imagine it's along the lines of going with a friend or even a referral from a provider.

The meeting was a little awkward at first since I didn't know anyone there. I introduced myself and I mostly listened. I did answer questions when they were asked, and I ended up visiting with a lady after. Some people seemed to enjoy that I was there and wanted to help me understand what they deal with on a daily basis and some major events they have experienced. It appeared to me the majority of people had problematic childhoods and generations of alcoholism. It was a common theme "my dad drank, my mom drank, I started drinking when I was very young, etc." They were all very kind and inviting.

AA is a way to support people and help them make better decisions for their lives. The fact is, a lot of people in addiction spend a good amount of time hurting people in some form and making bad decisions that sever relationships. AA uses the 12 steps to change their way of thinking, empower them, help them become accountable for their decisions, make amends where they need to, and teaches them to forgive themselves and others. They have other people who can understand them and support them. They can call their sponsor or a friend if they are having a rough moment. They recognize warning signs and have people they can reach out to that can help them make the next right decision to not relapse.

I found this group to be some of the most honest, self-aware people for the most part. This was one of the least judgmental groups I have had the pleasure of encountering and they seemed to accept you where you are and willing to help each other. One problem I noticed is that a lot of these people are single and choose to date each other. This can be problematic because if one relapses, the other is more likely to or if they break up, one generally quits going to the meetings and that takes away their support system. In the future, I may try to inform clients of this to help them prevent a problem before it's there.

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Grade Sheet

NAME: _____ DATE: _____ Box # _____

CRITERIA	POSSIBLE POINTS	EARNED POINTS	COMMENTS
1. Goals of AA, Al-Anon, etc.	2.5		
2. Membership eligibility.	2.5		
3. Referral sources for AA, Al-Anon, etc.	2.5		
4. Meeting description.	7.5		
5. Insight gained through this learning experience, and how this insight may be useful with future clients.	7.5		
6. Complete APA reference list. Proper Spelling/Grammar.	2.5		
TOTAL SCORE	25		

HONOR CODE STATEMENT:

I HAVE NOT RECEIVED, KNOWINGLY GIVEN, NOR TOLERATED THE USE OF UNAUTHORIZED AID ON THIS WORK.

SIGNATURE: Ashley Shields DATE: May 2, 2025

I filled this out today, so I put today's date.